

Transforming the Angry Client: Effective De-escalation Strategies

Presented by:

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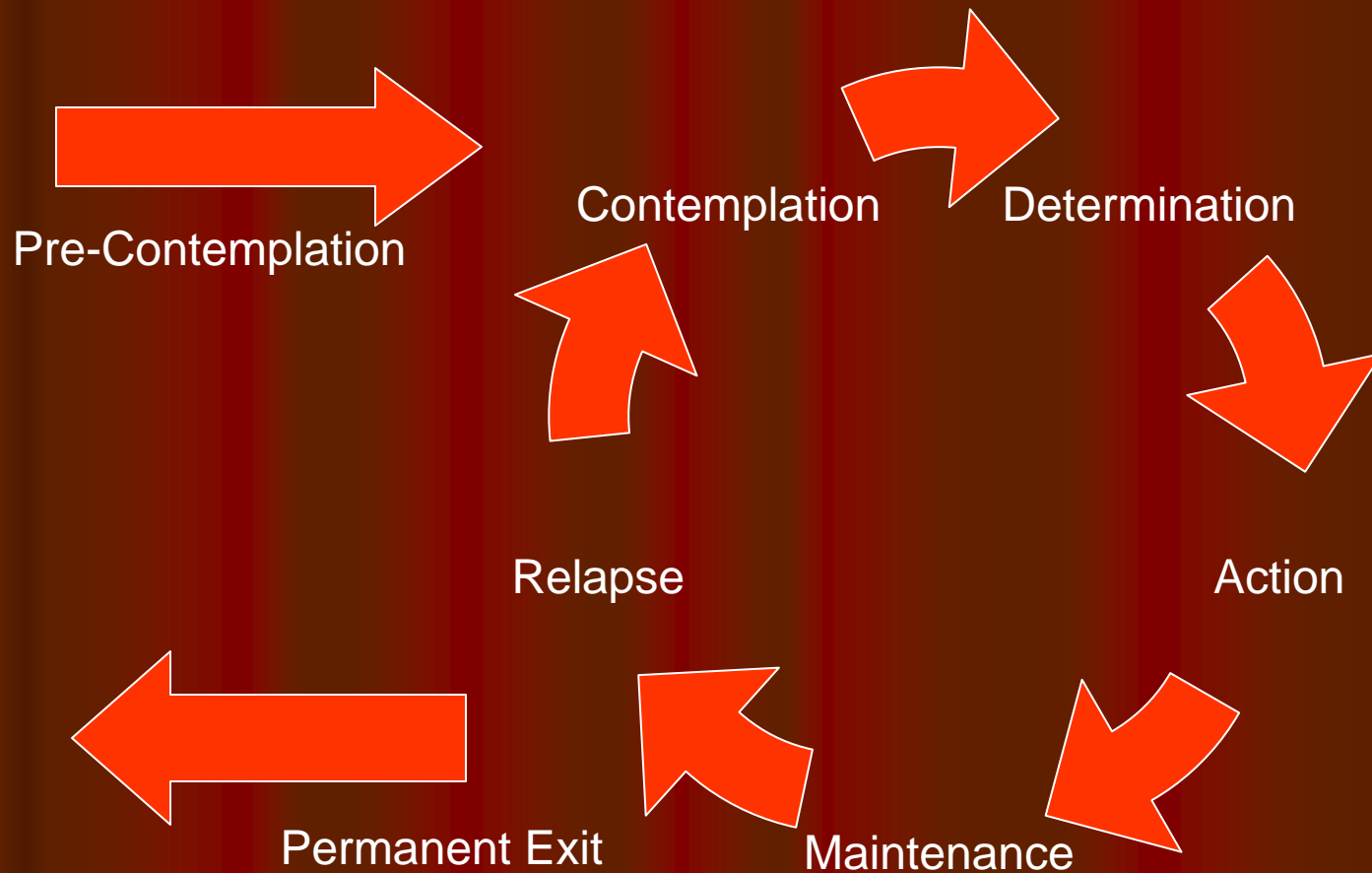
www.angermanagement.org

At the end of today, you will:

1. Learn LOTS of practical ways to deal with angry clients
2. Understand how to disarm angry clients
3. Increase your de-escalation skills
4. Understand how professional reactions impact an angry client
5. Both have had fun and learned

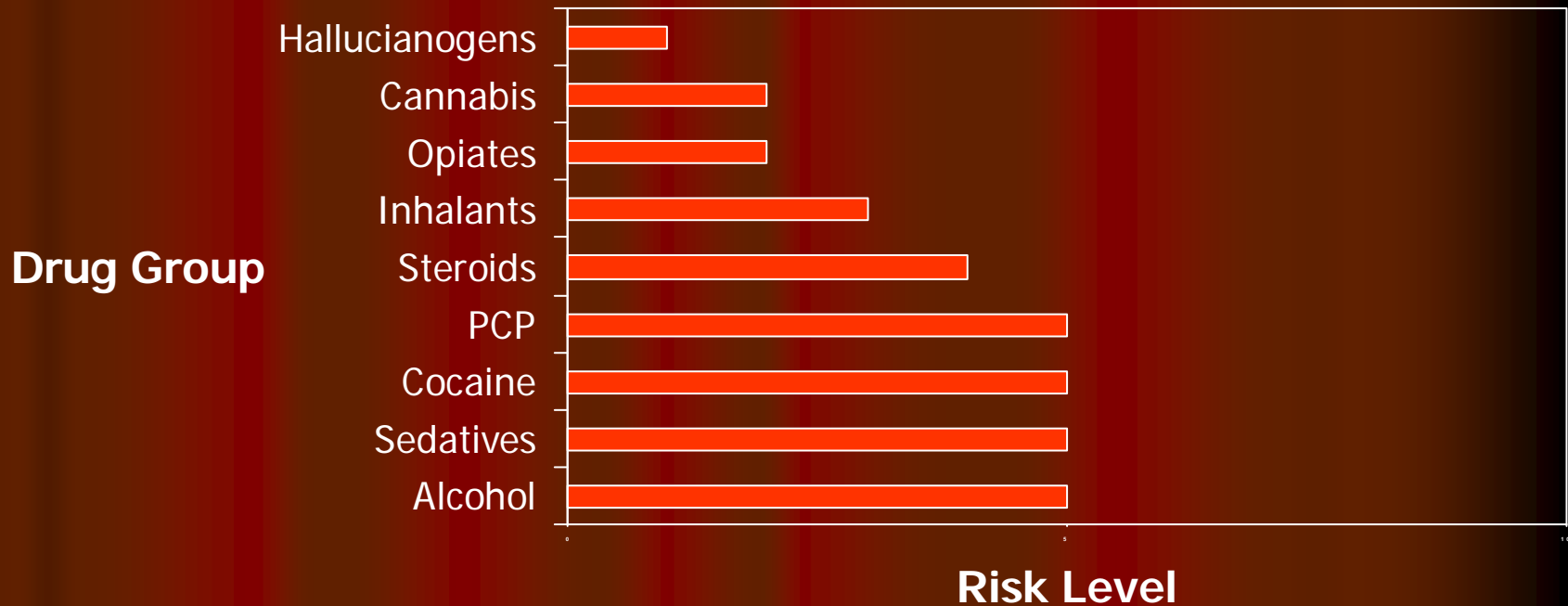
Why Are They So Mad?

Prochaska and DiClemente's Six Stages of Change



Anger/Aggression & Drugs/ETOH

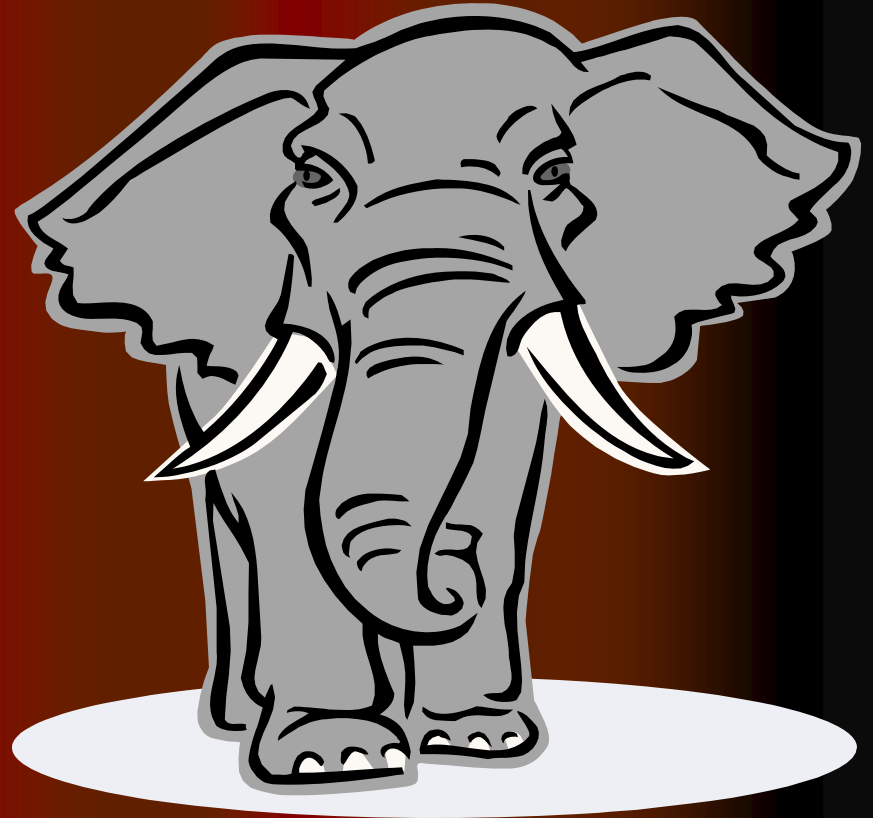
Relationship of Risk and Drugs



Cooperation vs. Obedience

Don't pull the
elephant's leg.

Work with the
elephant until it lifts
its own leg



Our Reaction.....

How we react in return
determines whether the situation
escalates, de-escalates, or
becomes mutually or individually
tolerable.

Most common defensive reactions

1. Surrender-Betray
2. Surrender-Sabotage:
3. Withdraw-Escape
4. Withdraw-Entrap
5. Counterattack-Justify
6. Counterattack-Assault:

Your hot buttons

- What are the situations that provoke me?
- What are the feelings that I experience most at work?
- What triggers these emotions?
- How do I express those feelings?
- What can I do to manage those situations?
- How can I change my attitude and behavior?

How do we react?

The key is "react". We become programmed to react rather than stop and...

- Listen to what is being said, and how it is being communicated (non-verbal)
- Not personalize the situation
- Stay Calm
- Avoid becoming defensive or blaming
- Show empathy
- Accept responsibility and criticism when valid

Barriers to Positive Reactions

- Language differences
- Cultural differences
- Poor listening skills
- Making assumptions
- Being preoccupied or in a hurry
- Reacting with anger
- Defensiveness
- Blaming
- Our hot buttons
- Others?

Phrases for miscommunication

- Ordering* – you must...you have to...
 - *Relationship dependent (Management directives)
- Threatening – if you don't, then...
- Preaching – you should...
- Lecturing – here's why you are wrong...
- Judging – you're lazy...you'll never change
- Excusing – it's not so bad...
- Labeling – you're being unrealistic...

Tip: It's always better to REQUEST and SUGGEST
than COMMAND and DEMAND

Words that Fuel Conflict

Words like these can make others defensive and feel judged:

Commands

You should...
You shouldn't...
You'd better...
You ought to...
You're supposed to...
You can't...
You will...

Ignoring

I'm busy
Don't bother me
Go away

Exaggerations

You Always...
You Never...

Comparisons

You're just like...
You're not like...
_____wouldn't...

Challenges

Why?

Others

Shaming
Blaming
Name calling
Threatening
Assuming
Interpreting
motives
"But..."

Communication Strategies

- DON'T promise what you can't deliver!
- Be clear about what you CAN and CANNOT do
- Don't tell the person that they are "getting upset"
- Don't tell the person to "calm down" or that they are "out of control" When you feel overwhelmed or out of control use "Exit Strategies"
- If the person's behavior is intimidating to you say so: "It's hard for me to help you, when you yell"

Communication Strategies

- Really listen; don't argue and don't give advice
- Use active listening to clarify: "Reflect"
- Try to understand how the other person thinks
- Don't side with or blame anyone
- Don't lie
- Be sure you understand and are understood.

De-escalation Strategies

Develop Safety Plans

Maintain Calm

- Avoid backed into corner-offer choices
- Don't allow power struggles
- Controlling behavior yields from fear-remain non-threatening
- It isn't you, if you are being non-defensive

More De-escalation Strategies

- Your reaction counts 9 out of 10 times
- Monitor tone and pace
- Change breathing
- Neutralize words
- Maintain open body language
- Use Exit Strategies

Even More De-escalation Strategies

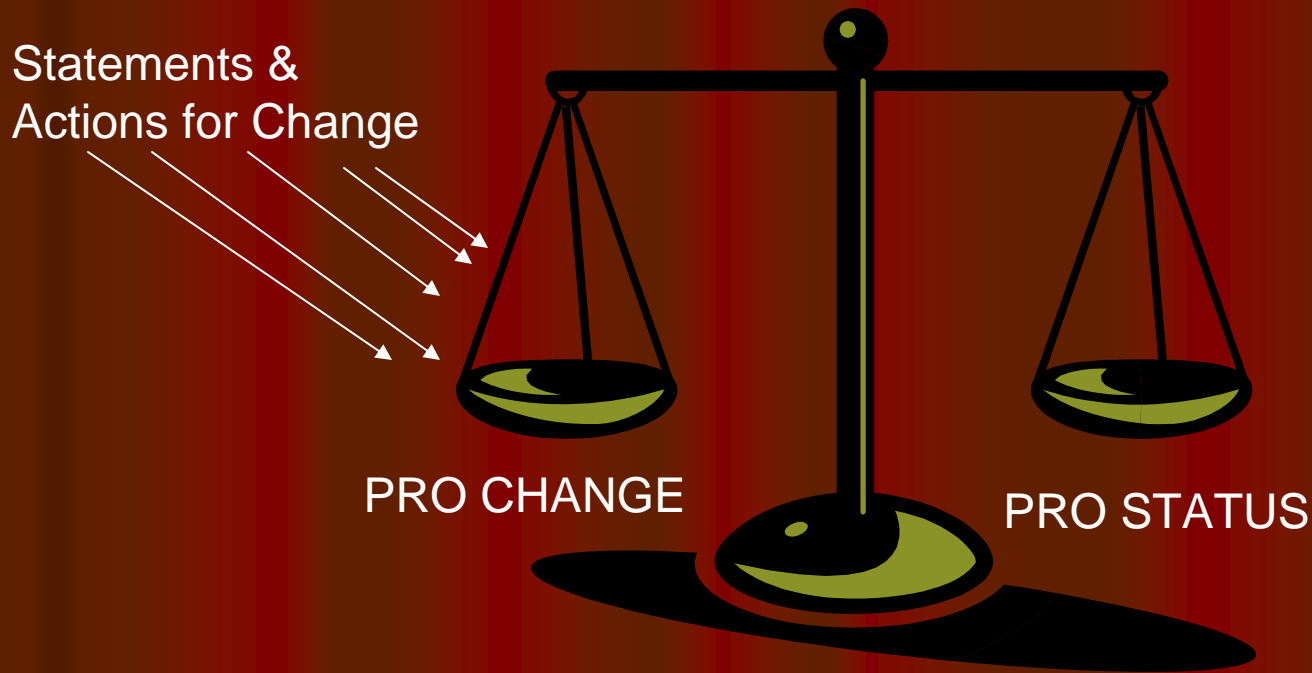
- NON-VERBAL OBSERVATIONS
 - Physical Appearance
 - Proxemics
 - Paralinguistic Cues
 - Breathing
 - Posture
 - Gestures and Other Body Signs
 - Eye Contact
 - Facial Cues
 - Rule Out- Cultural Factors and/or Medical Factors
- TRUST YOUR GUT

When to Ask for Help

- You have tried to handle the situation alone and it is getting worse
- You can't think objectively
- A participant in the conflict poses a threat to himself/herself or others

Pro-Change Vs. Pro-Status

Elicit Self-Motivational Statements
& Actions for Change



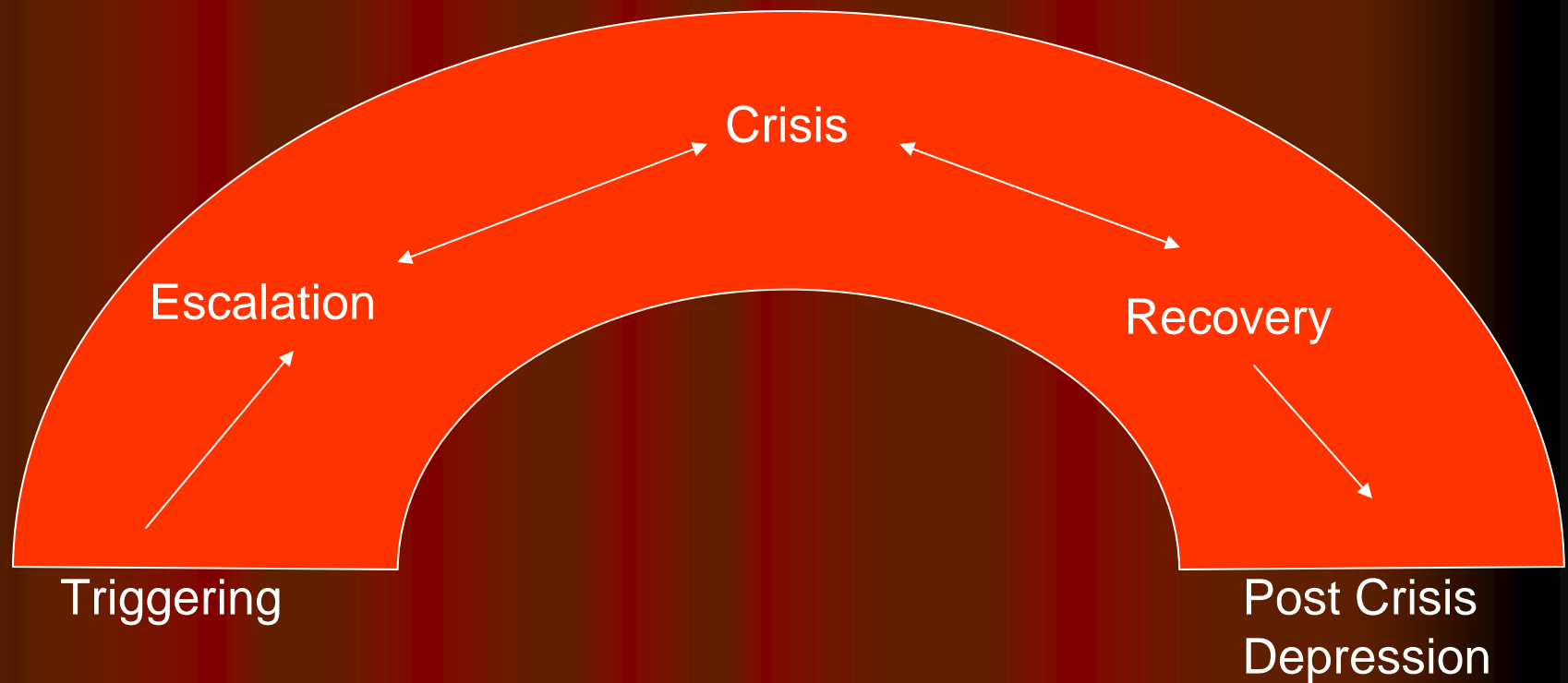
Let's Practice Being Non-Defensive

1Adapted from: Burns, The Feeling Good Handbook

Three main steps

1. Disarm them- find some grain of truth in what they are saying
2. Empathize with them
3. Ask Questions to move forward or make position statement

Kaplan & Wheeler's Crisis Cycle



What do you do at each phase?

Attending Skills

- Body Language
- I “hear you” expressions
- Mirroring (paraphrasing)
- Inquiry
- Empathy

Motivational Techniques

- Ask open-ended questions
- Listen Reflectively
- Affirm
- Summarize
- Problem Solving Model
- Elicit actions and statements for change

What is NOT reflective listening?

- Ordering, directing, or commanding
- Warning or threatening
- Giving advice, making suggestions, or providing solutions
- Persuading with logic, arguing or lecturing
- Moralizing, preaching, or telling client what they should do
- Disagreeing, judging, criticizing, or blaming
- Agreeing, approving, or praising
- Shaming, ridiculing, or labeling
- Interpreting or analyzing
- Reassuring, sympathizing, or consoling
- Questioning or probing
- Withdrawing, distracting, humoring, changing the subject

Professional Anger

"HEAL THY SELF"

BE A POSITIVE MODEL

HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

CAUSES OF PROFESSIONAL ANGER?

ANGER= SIGNAL (don't dismiss)

Further Reading

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